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News from Local Congregations

Phyllis Byrd, a UCC missionary serving in Kenya will be available from May 18 until June 14 to speak at churches throughout the conference. She had been invited to a number of Disciples congregations, and the following UCC churches have signed up to have her preach and present programs: First Congregational UCC, Atlanta, Sandy Creek UCC, Lafayette, AL, United Church Cookeville, UCC, TN, and Pleasant Hill Community UCC, TN. Phyllis, who is a theological educator, has been serving with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa since 2001. She is an ordained minister of the UCC, and a graduate of ITC in Atlanta. **If you wish to have her come to your congregation to preach or present a program, contact Tim Downs at tdowns@secucc.org.**

Plymouth Congregational UCC in Charleston is holding a membership rally and dinner on **March 29th at 4:00P**, and invites friends from across the Conference to join them. Contact Sister Tracey Scott at ebonyblair1@yahoo.com for details.



Holy Trinity Community UCC in Nashville led by **Pastor Cindy Andrews-Looper** has in three short years outgrown the facility in which they are worshipping. They have entered a conversation with the Church Building and Loan Fund of the Local Church Ministries of the UCC and the Conference concerning either the expansion of the facility on its current site, or the purchase of a larger facility.

Pilgrimage UCC, Marietta, GA, **pastor Kim Buchanan**, has announced that it too has outgrown its facility and is undertaking a **capital campaign** to expand their building.

Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Birmingham, **pastor Bud Precise**, continues its search for a called full-time pastor. Currently renting space with a Baptist church, they will be seeking to locate into a new building once they have completed their search.

Community Congregational UCC, Montgomery, has restarted its search for a new pastor, and will soon be receiving profiles.

Unity UCC, Montgomery, led by Bennie Liggins, ordained Deacon Stephen Williams on March 15th. They are also supporting **Oveta White** as a **student in care** before the Alabama Tennessee Church and Ministry Committee.

First Congregational UCC, Atlanta, has moved out of its temporary quarters rented from Morris Brown College to the community center which they have renovated behind their historical church building. They have located their offices and worship space in the center. The church building is continuing to undergo major renovations, which may take a number of years.

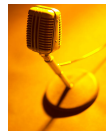
Virginia-Highland Church (A Baptist and UCC Congregation), Atlanta, has arranged to bring **Michael Piazza** in May to help them continue their process of congregational renewal. Michael is the dean of the **Cathedral of Hope in Dallas**, a UCC mega-church.

Bethany Congregational UCC, Thomasville, GA, sent a delegation including their pastor **Jeremy Rich**, to a national **Church Vitality Conference** hosted by the UCC in Cleveland. This is a part of a long term renewal strategy that the church undertook three years ago, and for which it has received a national grant.

Congratulations to **Kirkwood UCC**, Atlanta, their pastor **Susannah Davis** and **Peace Congregational UCC**, Clemson, SC, and their pastor **Susie Smith**, new



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church starts of the Southeast Conference, for having both received major grants from national to match their other support from members and the conference this month.

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Conference News and Announcements

The Annual Meeting of the Georgia-South Carolina Association will be held on Saturday, **April 4th**, and hosted by one of our newest churches, **Garden of Grace UCC**, Columbia, SC (www.goguucc.com). The theme of our keynoter, Associate Conference Minister **Kathy Clark** will be "Ministry—for Such a Time as This". The meeting will start at 9:00A and end at 1:30P. Breakfast and lunch will be served. The Association will also conduct an **Ecclesiastical Council** for **Ben Rose**, a candidate for ordination, a member of **Central Congregational UCC**, and hospice chaplain.

The Alabama-Tennessee Association announces its **Annual Meeting** to be held April 24-25, also hosted by one of our newest congregations, **Holy Trinity Community Church, UCC**, in Nashville. The event will begin on Friday evening at 4:00P and conclude with lunch on Saturday. The theme? *Ministry—For Such a Time as This!* The keynoter for the occasion is **Marti Baumer**, recently retired from the faculty of **Eden Theological Seminary**; Marti has been working closely on the Ministry Issues Pronouncement Implementation. Worship will be led by Holy Trinity Drama Team. Registration and information have been sent to all congregations.

We have conducted a total of three **Awareness/Education Meetings** concerning a campaign for the future of the Southeast Conference. The meetings have been held in Birmingham, Nashville, and Atlanta. There are two more meetings; **March 28th at 11:00A at Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga**, and **April 18th at 11:00A at Midway Congregational UCC, Midway GA**. The purpose of these meetings is to receive feedback on the proposed purpose of the campaign, to refine the presentation further, and to place it before the Board of the Conference in May asking them for a recommendation to the Annual Meeting of the Conference in June. If you are not one of the over 70 leaders and pastors who have attended a meeting to date, we hope you will make every effort to be at one of the two remaining meetings. Your voice and perspectives are valued.



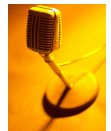
The congregations that were represented at the **Holy Trinity Community UCC Nashville Awareness/Education** meeting On February 28th were; **Holy Trinity Community UCC, Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Howard Congregational UCC, from Nashville, Pleasant Hill Community UCC, TN, Deer Lodge Congregational UCC, TN, Fairfield Glade Community Church, TN, Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta, Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga.**

At the meeting on **March 14**, at Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta, the following churches were represented: **Virginia Highland (A Baptist and UCC Congregation), First Congregational UCC, Rush Memorial UCC, Open Community UCC**, all of Atlanta, and **Garden of Grace UCC, Columbia, SC, Circular Congregational UCC, Charleston, SC and Peace Congregational UCC, Clemson, SC, Pilgrimage UCC, Marietta, GA. We thank First Congregational UCC, Birmingham, Holy Trinity Community UCC, Nashville and Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta** for their warm and generous hospitality at each of these meetings!

Mark your calendars! **The 2009 Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference UCC** will be held in the Atlanta area June 11-13. Our theme will be "Transforming Churches Transforming Lives", with a variety of workshops designed to equip churches for vitality in their ministries. We are pleased to announce that we will be hosted by Sandy Springs Christian Church, in the Northern tier of Atlanta. Sandy Springs Christian Church is a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) an ecumenical partner of the UCC. We will celebrate this relationship as a part of the meeting. UCC congregations of the Atlanta area will host the meeting together. We will be welcoming as a keynoter **Steve Sterner**, the **Acting Executive Minister of Local Church**



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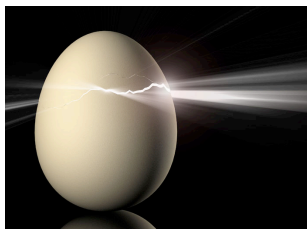
Ministries of the UCC, and a member of **Central Congregational UCC**, Atlanta. We are pleased to announce that our continuing partnership with **Lancaster Theological Seminary** will be marked with presentations and representation from the seminary.



Conference Minister **Tim Downs** attended a meeting of the **Southern Region UCC Conferences** in Orlando March 4-5 at which time we explored ways in which Southern, Southeast, Florida, and South Central can cooperate more fully in ministry. We celebrated the ways in which we are collaborating around new church development, youth ministries, financial development, and women's ministries. We look forward to future collaborations around leadership development, congregational vitality, and technologies.

We are continuing to develop the **Friends of the Conference Campaign**, which will offer an opportunity to make individual contributions to OCWM Basic Support, or specific ministries of the Conference. **The Board of Directors of the Conference has pledged over \$6,000** to support this effort to date.

The Southeast Conference staff is organizing a convocation of new churches from the Formula of Agreement partners in the Southeast, on April 21st. **Susannah Davis** the pastor of **Kirkwood UCC**, Atlanta, and **Susie Smith**, pastor of **Peace Congregational UCC**, Clemson, SC, will be gathering with their counterparts from congregations of three Presbyteries of the **Presbyterian Church (USA)** and the Southeastern Synod of the **ELCA**. The purpose of these will be to explore ways in which we can collaborate to strengthen the training and ministries we each have in new church development.



The Southeast Conference is beginning to cultivate congregations that are candidates to birth new churches. Called **'Church Multiplication'** the United Church of Christ considers this traditional strategy for new church development to be a growing edge. If this is an initiative in which you believe your church would have an interest, be in touch with **Cameron Trimble** at ctrimble@secucc.org.

The Southeast Conference was well represented at the gathering of the Boards of the Covenanted Ministries of the United Church of Christ, March 19-22. At that meeting the conversation concerning a reorganizing of the national setting of the UCC to achieve greater collaboration and coordination among the ministries of the UCC for more effective mission was brought to an end, and will not move forward. From our conference the following were present: **Gary Myers**, pastor of **Trinity Congregational UCC**, Athens, AL, **Dorinda Broadnax**, licensed minister and member of **Community Congregational UCC**, Montgomery, **Elizabeth Clement** and **Marvin Morgan** members of **First Congregational UCC**, Atlanta, **Michael Pater**, pastor of **Central Congregational UCC**, Atlanta, **Tim Downs**, Conference Minister. **Elizabeth Clement**, who serves on the Board of the Office of General Ministries of the UCC, also serves on the Governance Follow-up Task Force II, the recommendations of which were turned down at this meeting.

To view the full calendar of events of the Conference and Associations, visit our web site at www.secucc.org!

Posted on March, 2009

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Concerns and Celebrations

We are pleased to report that **Dick Woodward** was elected on March 22nd to serve as long-term interim pastor at **Midway Congregational UCC**, Midway, GA. Dick is well known to us in the Southeast Conference, having served over the years as pastor of **First Congregational UCC**, Savannah, GA, and some years ago at Midway as well. Dick has also served as chair of the Georgia-South Carolina Association Church and Ministry Committee.

Michelle Taylor, PhD., a member of **Unity UCC**, Montgomery, AL, announced that she has been appointed Professor of Hebrew Scriptures at **Bangor Theological Seminary**, a seminary of the United Church of Christ. She will be living in Portland, ME.



Adrienne Singley-Candido, Administrative Assistant of the Southeast Conference is expecting a baby girl in May. The event was celebrated March 12th with a shower held by the Southeast Conference staff.

Paige Pearson, recently called as pastor of **United Church UCC**, Cookeville, TN, has announced that she and her husband Kyle are expecting their first baby in October.

We were saddened to receive word of the death of the mother of **Sharon Weible**, married to **Lyle Weible**. Sharon and Lyle are members of **Pleasant Hill Community Church UCC**, TN. Lyle serves on the **Conference Board of Directors**.

On March 1st, **Robin Lee Fitch** was installed in her ministry as a therapist in private practice in a service of four way covenant, at **Central Congregational UCC**, Atlanta. The partners in the covenant with her are the Southeast Conference, the Georgia-South-Carolina Association, and Central UCC.

Kathi Martin, member of **Victory Church**, Stone Mountain, GA, has been called to serve on the staff of Victory as a pastoral counselor. Kathi, a member of Victory, was the founding pastor of **GSN Ministries UCC**, and recently served on the staff of First Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta.

The **Georgia-South Carolina Association Church and Ministry Committee** took the following actions at its meeting on March 9th:

Received **Chris Glaser's** request to enter the process of discernment leading to privilege of call. Chris has been called to serve as transitional pastor at **Virginia Highland Church (A Baptist and UCC Congregation)**, Atlanta. Ordained by the MCC, he is an author of numerous books and articles.

Interviewed **Shannon Michael Pater**, recently called as senior pastor of **Central Congregational UCC**, Atlanta, and agreed to accept his transfer of ordained ministerial standing from Iowa, pending his joining the church he is serving.

Accepted the transfer of ordained ministerial standing for **D. Houston Hall**, from the Western North Carolina Association of the Southern Conference, UCC. He recently joined **Central Congregational UCC**, Atlanta. Houston, who is an intentional interim minister, and serving a congregation in North Carolina at this time, is moving to Gainesville, GA.

Noted that they have now received the transfer of ordained ministerial standing for **Ron Bonner** from the Minnesota Conference UCC. Ron, a member of **First Congregational UCC**, has been called as a transitional minister of the **Lutheran Church of Atonement (ELCA)** in Atlanta. Ron has previously worked with Fortress Press, and before that on the national staff of the UCC.



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Ted Brelsford, a member of **Central Congregational UCC**, Atlanta, is completing his work toward ordination in the Georgia South Carolina Association, while he serves his call as pastor of **Orchard Park Community Church, Orchard Park, NY**. The Association Church and Ministry Committee has entered an agreement with the Western Association of the New York Conference to complete the preparation for ordination with Ted. The Western Association will accept the work, and arrange an Ecclesiastical Council and ordination.

Dale Owen, Dorothea Lotze-Kola, both members of **Central Congregational UCC**, Atlanta, **Allen Mullinax**, member of **Pilgrimage UCC**, and **Forenza Chatmon** of **Bethany Congregational UCC**, Thomasville, GA, are retiring from the Georgia-South Carolina Association Church and Ministry Committee, having completed their terms. We are deeply grateful for their gifts of leadership.

If there is news that you wish to have shared with others in the Southeast Conference family, please contact Tim at tdowns@secucc.org.

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Upcoming Conference at Beloved UCC, Birmingham, AL



We Drink From Our Own Wells

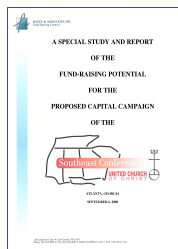
A Workshop for Women To Replenish and Renew
Saturday, April 18, 9:00 - 3:00
Offered by Mary Bea Sullivan & Angie Wright

Women carry the world on their shoulders. We work for social change -- trying to save the whale or save the world. We care for aging parents or children with special needs. We carry the daily double burden of family and work. We are passionate about our work. It fulfills us. It gives us a sense of purpose. We are needed, and we need to be needed.

But sometimes we are weary and heavy-laden. Sometimes we feel that we're all alone and everything depends on us. Sometimes we become resentful of the work that we care so deeply about. Latin American activist Gustav Gutierrez says, "we drink from our own wells." What happens if your well goes dry? What if the water in your well becomes poisoned with bitterness or anger? What happens if you lose your way and no longer know the way to the well? How can we find our way to the well and renew ourselves, so that we can go back into our world and our work, carrying our loads with peace and gladness of heart?

On Saturday, April 18, from 9 - 3, we will together gather at the well to drink deeply. For more information, see attached brochure
To register, go to <http://www.marybeasullivan.com/store.htm>

SEC Capital Campaign Update



The Southeast Conference has engaged Steve Havey of Havey & Associates to work with us as we explore the possibility of a Conference Capital Campaign. He has completed an extensive Needs Assessment Survey which he presented to the Board of Directors at our September meeting. If you would like to read the assessment, [click here](#).

TAP Goes to Synod ... Again!

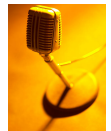
For the second General Synod in a row, through the generosity of the Carpenter Foundation, the Southeast Conference will send five Theology Among the People (TAP) participants to General Synod 27 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This is one of the best ways to learn about and experience the UCC -- in worship, fellowship, and governance -- in one of its most diverse and covenantal expressions.

The parameters of this opportunity are as follow:

1. You must be an active member of a current TAP group or a graduate of TAP. (Preference will be given to current members and to those who have not attended General Synod in the past. All are encouraged to apply.)
2. You must be able to attend the entire Synod (June 26 - 30, 2009).
3. You must be able to provide for your own meals and amenities while at Synod.



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4. You must be able to provide your own transportation to and from a metropolitan airport close to your home.
5. You are asked to contribute \$200 to help cover the costs of the event (payable to Southeast Conference and due at time of confirmation of your participation).
6. The Southeast Conference will cover the following costs (less \$200 – see #5 above) for those who are chosen to go:

- * Registration to General Synod
- * Transportation to and from Synod
- * Hotel costs while attending Synod (double occupancy)
- * One shared meal for TAPpers at Synod

If you are interested and have these dates available, please email Kathy Clark (kclark@secucc.org) on or before April 1st, 2009 indicating in a few paragraphs why you want to attend this Synod and how you will share your experiences with your TAP group and/or your congregation.

Applicants will be notified of their status by April 15th.

For further information, please contact Kathy Clark, Associate Conference Minister and Director of TAP, at kclark@secucc.org.

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